

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Examiner is thanked for the clarity and conciseness of the Office Action and for the citation of the references which have been studied with interest and care.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-8, 10, 12-13, 20, 22-25 and 28-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherman et al. (US-6,021,309 hereinafter, Sherman) in view of Ibanez-Meier et al. (US-5,946,603 hereinafter, Ibanez-Meier).

Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherman in view of Ibanez-Meier as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Rydbeck et al. (US-5,930,718 hereinafter, Rydbeck).

Claims 14 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherman in view of Ibanez-Meier as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Lin et al. (US 2002/0114398 hereinafter, Lin).

Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherman in view of Ibanez-Meier as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Gilmore et al. (US-5,835,847 hereinafter, Gilmore).

Claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherman in view of Ibanez-Meier as applied to claim 20 above, and further in view of Duggan (US-4,776,035).

Claims 31 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherman in view of Ibanez-Meier as applied to claim 1 and 20 above, and further in view of the Applicant's admitted prior art, Dybdal et al. (US-5,781,845 hereinafter, Dybdal).

Claims 1, 15, 20, 22-30 and 32 have been canceled.

The remaining rejected claims have been rewritten to be dependent from claim 16, which is allowable for the reasons discussed below. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 16-19 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 16 has been rewritten in independent form, incorporating the limitations of canceled claims 1 and 15. Claims 17-19 are dependent from claim 16. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-8, 10-14 and 31 have been rewritten to be dependent from claim 16 and, therefore, are also allowable.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Applicant submits that the application is in condition for allowance. Concurrence by the Examiner and early passage of the application to issue are respectfully requested.

Any additional fees which are required in connection with this communication and which are not specifically provided for herewith are authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 500651. Any overpayments are also authorized to be credited to this account.

Respectfully submitted,

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/Peter L. Holmes/

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